**Task Force on Virtual Schools**

**October 28, 2010**

**Sen. Stanislawski** opened the meeting at 9:10 AM by presenting the objectives for the day. Tulsa Tech / Union Public Schools will present on the e20/20 consortium and solutions. **Ed Sheakley, OSSAA Executive Secretary,** will present on concerns over how virtual students will participate in activities through their local school district. **Sen. Stanislawski:** “the goal of the task force is to design a system to raise the level of success for students, using whatever means is available.” “Money is not the answer if change is not included.” “We are looking at improving the success rate for the children.”

**Dr. Kara Gae Neal** and **Dr. Kirt Hartzler** opened the day by presenting on the Tulsa County School Board Consortium Virtual Learning Committee: e20/20 Project.

**Dr. Hartzler** - The digital divide is growing. The expectations of digital natives in terms of digitally rich learning environments are increasingly demanding. (Clayton Christensen “Disrupting Class”) By 2019 more than half of learning will take place online. Virtual learning experiences should be age appropriate and not present undue restrictions on learning.

Why should we adopt digital learning? 1.) The potential for closing achievement gaps between OK students & their counterparts in other states, 2.) To equalize the access and opportunity for all learners, and 3.) To move students into a more self-directed mode of learning.

How should this initiative be approached? 1.) Define the concept; 2.)recognize and adopt best practices; 3.) foster professional development in virtual learning THROUGH virtual learning, and 4.) leverage consortium advantages to minimize costs.

**Dr. Kara Gae Neal** – “this has been like building the plane while we fly it.” The Career Tech structure is unique to Oklahoma – CTE is the partner of common and higher ed. Tulsa Technology Center covers a 935 sq. mi. service area. Tulsa Technology Center, in collaboration with Tulsa Community College, developed “The 8th Floor” to serve the Professional Development needs of all three educational entities in the Oklahoma public education system.

The **e2020 consortium** was founded on four principles: 1.) Professional Development; 2.) shared resources; 3.) shared costs, and 4.) shared results (student success). eg. 8th floor participants become the eligible members for the e2020 consortium. Cost per student for consortium members: $2.50 if in-district; $3.20 if out-of-district. Total costs: $294,354 – over the 3 year contract period with e2020. Early results indicate success in multiple areas.

**Kirt Hartzler** – Our goal @ Union is that we WILL graduate 100% of our students. How do we most effectively meet our stakeholder needs? We must think and act differently; we have to make education fit the individual, and no longer cling to a “one size fits all” mentality. We have to be a provider of access and resources, not a builder of walls and restrictions. We need to provide for accountability and rigor free of too many guidelines and boundaries; we need to build structure that doesn’t constrain. Remediation can and must be done at the most appropriate and least expensive level. Learning becomes personal. We must come to the realization that, to our digital natives, “time is learning’s warden.”

**Sen. Stainslawski**: “Virtual learning is the transition of education, not the death of education.” “I applaud the efforts of the consortium.” “Is e2020 similar to K-12 and others?” **Kirt Hartzler**: “We looked at different vendors; this is the same concept but there are some that are more robust.” **Dr. Neal**: “We don’t want to be vendor driven.” “We don’t exert oversight or authority over consortium members.”

**Sen. Stainslawski** : “Through the consortium, can a student be a full-time student?” **Dr. Neal** – “That depends on how the school decides to utilize the access.” **Kirt Hartzler**: “We will allow students to be full-time students in the next year through the virtual environment if that is the best solution for them.” “We are constantly evaluating.”

**Robert Franklin**: “Have you had any feedback from parents at this point?” **Kirt Hartzler**: “Not so much from parents, but from students; we have a National Merit Scholar finalist who opted to attend virtual school exclusively for next year.”

**Sen. Stainslawski**: “We hope to go down the road of fleshing out the guidelines for virtual education to match the legislation that was passed last session.” “At this time we will begin to explore how we can go down this path together as we allow students of virtual learning to participate in school activities.”

**Ed Sheakley**: “We are here for kids.” “We want all kids to have access to and participate in co-curricular activities.” “Kids have changed, the landscape has changed.” “We welcome the opportunity to participate in this activity.” “These bullet points represent our committee’s concerns.”

1. Validation - being sure these are the students who are doing the work; also, some mechanism must be in place to insure that progression through the virtual schoolwork doesn’t get tailored by the ILP along the way due to the eligibility requirements of participation.

**Sen. S.** “Is that a problem?” **ES** - “The academic rules require that the student make academic progress -rules created by OSSAA membership.” “The semester rule must also apply.” **RF** – “As long as they master the competencies required, can they be considered progressing?” **ES** – “Our concern is that they are engaged and measurable progress is maintained throughout the course of the year, season, semester, trimester, block, etc.” **RF** – “Is the spirit of the rule that they are a full-time student, making good academic progress?” **Sen. S.** “That contradicts the example put forward earlier.” “If we move forward with this concept, that perspective will need to change.” “If the ILP allows for advanced mastery, we will need to review the way we look at participation.”

1. 90% attendance policy - How will that be measured for virtual learning?
2. Conduct rule - students who are suspended cannot participate - how will that be regulated? Transfers cannot evade suspension for eligibility of participation.
3. Mandated attendance requirements - Student-teacher interactions should be validated and need to be regulated. **Sen. S.** – “We can establish guidelines for validation of acceptable academic progress through the course of the season.” **ES** – “Weekly grade checks for active participants are mandated.”
4. Can the tailoring of the ILP create an advantage for a team?
5. Concern over language in section 10; ***“as approved by local BOE and student’s ILP.”*** Our concern is that local BOEs could write policy that would circumvent or supersede OSSAA policy. **RF** – “What about NOAA?” **ES** – “OSSAA members can participate with NOAA schools.”
6. Residence rules - How does this work when students transfer between districts? **Sen. S.** – “This is no different than students transferring without the virtual schools component.” **Sen. Ford** – “This virtual learning is going to be very disruptive.” “It may take a few years.” **ES** – “Co-curricular activities are a side of education that inspires a great deal of passion.” “We are fooling ourselves if we think parents are not actively interested in following successful coaches, teams, or athletes.” “Rules and guidelines are effective in maintaining a level playing field.”

**Sen. S.** – “I think most of these points are surmountable.”

**Sen. Stanislawski** opened the afternoon session @ 2:04 PM. **Lisa** (?) from the State Supt’s. office began by defining online instruction and presented the latest version of the draft proposal on Curriculum and Instruction – Online Course Procedures. Online Instruction was defined as rigorous, comprehensive, and not able to be completed in a very short time span. **Sen. S.** “Define Asynchronous and Synchronous – is it correct to state that synchronous relates to dialog between presenter and learner in real time?” **Lisa** “Yes.” The remainder of the session was spent discussing the language of the draft proposal, with changes and deletions being made to almost every section. **Sen. Stanislawski** ended the afternoon with a reminder of the remaining meetings scheduled for the task force.